LLOWSHIP IN

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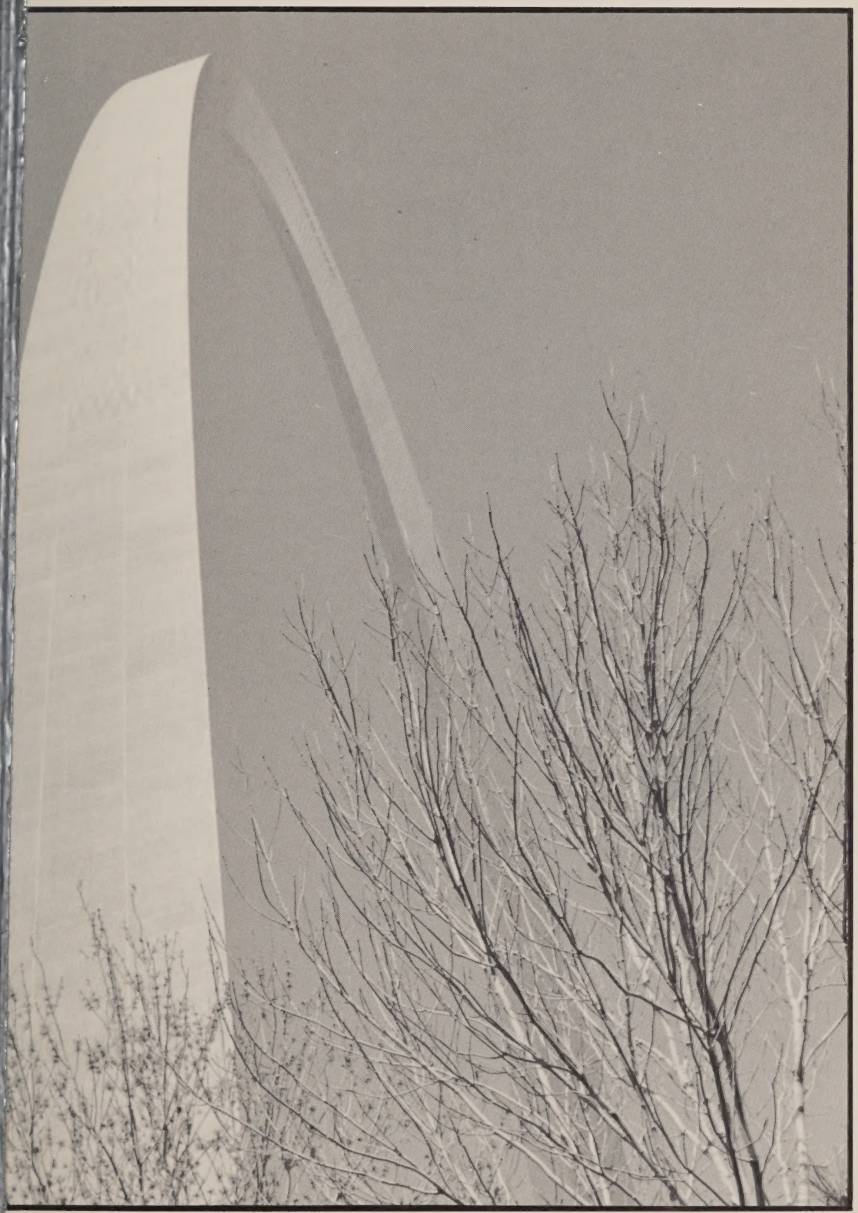

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A Message From the President 2

From the Editor 4

Insights 6

Change the World with Your Prayers, *by* P. H. Raynis 8

Tai Ji: Creating Stillness Within Motion, *by* Geery S. Howe 11

Interfaith Network 16

Prayers 17

Speaking Up for Creation, *by* Douglas V. Steere 18

Spirituality and Everyday Life: Ten Ways to Pray for Peace, *by* Carol Bialock 20

Ask Angela, *by* Barbara Ackerman 23

New Poetry 28

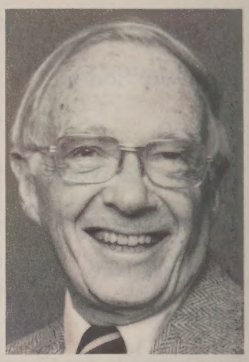
"A Transforming Experience": Into God's Presence, *by* David R. Smith 32

What God Did for Zeke the Fussy Caterpillar, *by* Robert O'Rourke 35

News from Fellowship in Prayer 42

Letters to the Editor 43

Cover Photograph by Janet Gnall



Shortly before Easter, the International Coordinating Committee on Religion and the Earth (ICCRE) met at Wainwright House, in Rye, New York. ICCRE's general purpose is to foster awareness of the spiritual nature of our environmental crisis and to generate a renewed realization that, as the Rev. Dr. Thomas Berry has said, "The Earth is a communion of subjects; it is not a collection of objects."

The Wainwright House meeting was part of a series leading to the gathering of world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in June of 1992.

Our specific purpose at the Wainwright House meeting was to draft a formal expression of religious concern for the Earth in the form of an Earth Charter—to be subscribed to by representatives of the Earth's faith communities—that will significantly impact the United Nations Conference in Brazil.

The drafting committee is still far from finished with its work, but I would like to share with you now some of the thoughts contributed by representatives of the Baha'i members of ICCRE. Reflecting on the spiritual dimension of the environmental crisis, they said:

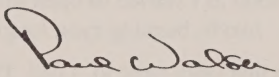
> The condition of our spiritual life is inseparable from the condition of our surroundings. Environmental degradation is accompanied by degradation of human sensibilities. Harmony with our environment is intimately connected with inner peace and a harmonious society. Thus spiritual values cannot prosper nor the highest human good be achieved, either personally or as a society, in a world where nature is despoiled.
>
> Destructive exploitation of nature is a symptom, along with the exploitation of minorities, indigenous peoples, and women, of a general sickness of the human spirit. None of these symptoms may be remedied independently. A holistic approach is necessary, which fosters individual spiritual development in the context of a just society in harmony with its environment.
>
> The world has become one interconnected system. Injustice and decay in one part of the world causes fevers and pains all through the body of

humanity. A global perspective is necessary for solving these problems, whether they are environmental or social, educational or economic. This global perspective must uphold the essential oneness of humanity and the interconnectedness of the global ecosystem.

Following the ICCRE meeting, several hundred people came to Wainwright House to participate in a conference on the "Spirit of the Earth" designed to develop spiritual awareness of and responses to the nature and seriousness of the environmental crisis. As Thomas Berry pointed out, we cannot have well people on a sick planet.

Speakers and workshop leaders included old friends of Fellowship in Prayer, such as Kusumita Pedersen, of Global Forum and the Rev. Dr. Donald Conroy, President of the North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology, as well as Tom Berry and Danny Martin who participated in our "Worldwide Day of Prayer and Mediation to Help Heal Mother Earth" last September. Other speakers, who are actively involved in bringing spiritual insights to bear on the healing of the earth, included Sister Miriam Therese MacGillis, director of Genesis Farm and Center for Earth Stewardship, and Australian rainforest activist John Seed.

Both conferences generated a strong feeling of communion with God about the future of the Earth community and our responsibility for its preservation.



Paul Walsh

The life of prayer, when it is genuine, always brings with it a call to open the door of the heart and leave it open, even when it becomes painful. And it will become painful—in many ways. Michel Quoist, a clergyman and poet who writes from a deep experience of prayer and love, goes all the way to the edge of mystery with his understanding of spiritual suffering—and its infinite rewards. The following fragment from one of his poems shows how opening—which is the way some people define spirituality—leads to experience of the divine.

Lord, I was so peaceful at home, I was so comfortably settled.
It was well furnished, and I felt cosy.
I was alone, I was at peace.
Sheltered from the wind, the rain, the mud.
I would have stayed unsullied in my ivory tower.
But Lord, you have discovered a breach in my defenses,
You have forced me to open my door,
Like a squall of rain in the face, the cry of people has awakened me. . . .
As a ray of light slips in unnoticed, your grace has stirred me
. . . and rashly enough, I left my door ajar. Now, Lord, I am lost!
Outside people were lying in wait for me.
I did not know they were so near; in this house, in this street, in this office; my neighbor, my colleague, my friend.
As soon as I started to open the door I saw them, with outstretched hands, burning eyes, longing hearts, like beggars on church steps.

The first ones came in, Lord. There was after all some space in my heart.
I welcomed them. I would have cared for them, . . . my very own little lambs, my little flock. . . .
But the next ones, Lord, the others, I had not seen them; they were hidden behind the first ones.
There were more of them, they were wretched; they overpowered me without warning. . . .
Now they have come from all over, in successive waves, pushing one another, jostling one another. . . .
They come bending under heavy loads; loads of injustice, of resentment and hate, of suffering and sin . . .
They drag the world behind them with everything rusted, twisted, or badly adjusted.

Lord, they hurt me! They are in the way, they are everywhere.
They are too hungry, they are consuming me!

I can't do anything anymore; as they come in they push the door, and the door opens wider . . .
Lord, my door is wide open!
I can't stand it any more! It's too much! It's no kind of a life! What about my job? my family? my peace? my liberty? and me?

Quoist answers his own question by imagining that God says to him: "You have gained all." While so many people were entering the door of your heart:

I, your God,
Slipped in among them.

Here is the source of the commitment and energy and endurance that it takes to serve others, and to keep on serving, whatever the cost.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

This prayer may be read in its entirety in Prayers of Life, *Gill and Macmillan Ltd., Dublin, 1965.*

There are values so great that our hearts must break to give them entrance.

Source Unknown

To the *knowing* power, God is forever incomprehensible. But to . . . the *loving* power, . . . God is entirely comprehensible to the full. . . . This is a marvelous miracle of love that will never end. Forever shall God do it and never shall God cease from doing it.

Robert Way

Our lives lose direction the moment they cease to be a voyage for the discovery of God.

Source Unknown

Reason is a light God has kindled in the soul.

Aristotle

No satisfying understanding of suffering can be achieved if one considers only this life and this world which we know. The context of an endless, eternal life must be in the background of any . . . exploration of suffering.

John Powell

O, God, help me to victory over myself, for difficult to conquer is oneself, though when that is conquered, all is conquered.

Jain Scriptures

A saint is simply a human being whose soul has grown up to its full stature by full response to its environment, God.

Evelyn Underhill

Every limit is a bridge.

Robert Jay Lifton

O lead my spirit, O raise it from these weary depths.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Those things, good Lord, that we pray for, Give us thy grace to labor for.

Sir Thomas More

Wherever I go—only Thou! Wherever I stand—only Thou! Just Thou; again Thou; always Thou!

An Early Hasidic Song

Change the World with Your Prayers

P. H. RAYNIS

Faith in the power of intercessory prayer—prayer for others and for causes—can change every aspect of life. And it transforms the one who prays, because "we sense we're directly contributing to the happiness or success or comfort of those we pray for."

Prayer can change the world. How many times have we heard these words and thought them nice, in sentiment, but done nothing? Well, prayer can change the world—and it has, from the Philippines to Eastern Europe. And there are five simple approaches that can help you get started.

1. *Use a prayer calendar.*

A calendar with large squares will make it easier to pray effectively for both personal and universal needs. The squares can be marked with such occasions as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, exams, job interviews. Most of these milestones in the lives of loved ones, after all, can use prayer backup. And this practice can make prayer time especially satisfying, because we sense we're directly contributing to the happiness or success or comfort of those we pray for.

National and international events have a place on this calendar, too. Supreme Court deliberations and election days, for example, need more prayer support than they normally get.

2. *Pray the newspaper.*

Reading the daily paper can be a kind of *lectio divina*, or spiritual reading. In this monastic discipline one reads a book or Scripture and meditates on it. This leads to prayer.

In a similar way, we can read the news, meditate on it, and then cover it with our prayers. We can pray for the welfare of those involved in an earthquake, for wisdom for those about to make major decisions, for

The author of Saving the World from Your Home *and numerous articles, P. H. Raynis lives in the mountains on the Mexican border of Arizona. The Raynis family provides for many of its own needs, including food, electricity, and water.*

forgiveness for those who need it, or for healing for those caught in the web of addiction.

3. *Practice spiritual adoption.*

Just as St. Therese did with the criminal Pranzini, you can "adopt" well-known figures and pray for them.

Politicians, entertainers, writers, and newspeople (just to name a few) have a tremendous influence on the world, so let us pray that they use their influence for good. Such persons need not know they've been adopted, and we certainly don't need their permission to pray for them.

4. *Join a prayer organization.*

By joining your efforts with those of others, you can offer tremendous support to those you are praying for.

Mother Teresa, in her *Sick and Suffering Co-Workers*, has set up a program whereby individuals can be assigned their own Missionary of Charity, for whom the enrolled pray. An exchange of letters with the adopted Missionary of Charity usually ensues, so the worker's needs might be specifically petitioned. Queries can be made c/o May Kay Gormely, 533 Cloverleaf Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55422.

5. *Begin a prayer network of your own.*

Some issues are local rather than national. Strikes, natural disasters, plant closings, and similar occurrences need prayerful attention, too. You can

start a prayer network by praying by yourself, then mentioning your work to others. Church bulletins or a small ad in the local paper inviting others to join in support of a particular need may inform many who wanted to do something but didn't know how.

If the need is long-term and the network becomes formal, you can always designate your own network prayer. Some method of keeping members informed is also helpful.

Whatever our method of intercession, we can be rewarded by knowing that we're helping in a very real way to bring God's presence to the earth. Such prayer is a valid way indeed to minister to our world.

Tai Ji: Creating Stillness Within Motion

GEERY S. HOWE

For this Tai Ji teacher, practicing the ancient Chinese art is "a daily opportunity to open the heart, clear the mind, and experience sacred emptiness."

A Moving Meditation

The dew was thick upon the grass and the dawn was a morning star upon the eastern horizon. All of us faced the rising sun and began to do Tai Ji,* a sequence of slow graceful movements from ancient China that correspond to a series of earth-based metaphors. The full moon was slipping away behind us while we moved through this dance of life. As we practiced this moving meditation, we became more and more open to that which is greater than ourselves. Tai Ji gave us wings and roots; our hearts, our minds and our bodies achieved a new place of inner and outer balance. In the gentleness of the sequence, we discovered a deeper level of humility and receptivity to the Spirit which moves through all things. The deer who stepped out of the woods a hundred yards in front of us bowed her head and continued to graze upon the spring grass. We were one with the moment, dancing like leaves in the wind.

Tai Ji is an individual discipline and a moving meditation, starting with the simple understanding that our bodies are the center of our energy spheres. The human energies that we experience doing Tai Ji are very close to and, at times, a part of the dynamics of nature. Through the practice of Tai Ji, we describe how we feel in our bodies in terms of earth energy metaphors. Emphasizing a continuous, circular breathing pattern, Tai Ji helps us find a moving center. Yet, while we are constantly in motion, we come to retain a sense of quietness and stillness.

The practice of Tai Ji encourages the flow of the "Ch'i." In simple terms, Ch'i flows through our bodies on pathways called meridians and can be described as the body electricity. Ch'i also flows through all of nature and the world around us. The earth energy Ch'i enters us through

The President of Morning Star Associates in West Branch, Iowa, Geery Howe specializes in spiritual ways to human wellbeing. His most recent book is Listen to the Heart: a New Approach to Wellness.

*Also spelled T'ai Chi—Ed.

the balanced stance that we take when we begin Tai Ji, feeding us just like the nourishment that enters through the roots of a tree. This earth energy is connected with the heavens through the body. As Chungliang Al Huang, a Chinese Tai Ji master dancer says: "Ch'i flows through us, within us, in spite of us, like water moving around all detours and congestions (the intellectual blockages in the human thinking). And it is the power and the joy of Tai Ji practice to keep this energy force alive."

> A Taoist sage . . . would leave his cave in the mountains and perform a series of movements which imitated what he observed in nature—the movements of animals, birds, clouds and wind. These movements increased his circulation and vigor without disturbing his deep meditative concentration.

A Simple Beginning

The first documented knowledge of Tai Ji occurs in China around the first century A.D. At that time it was considered ancient. A popular story related that in the beginning a Taoist sage who studied and meditated

on the flow of life forces would leave his cave in the mountains and perform a series of movements which imitated what he observed in nature—the movements of animals, birds, clouds, and wind. These movements increased his circulation and vigor without disturbing his deep meditative concentration.

To the observer, Tai Ji appears to be a dance of slow moving postures similar to Yoga. To the practitioner, the relaxed and flowing movements nourish the body, mind and spirit, bringing them into harmony with the natural order of the universe and allowing the higher self to surface more easily. Practiced today by thousands of Westerners along with the millions who still practice it in China, Tai Ji's calm fluid movements are attracting and inspiring new students throughout the world.

Creating Sacred Emptiness

There are no beginnings and no endings in the practice of Tai Ji. Life is a continual journey of awakening and discovery. Our goal is to stay "awake" as we attune to the journey, the living path of growth before us.

Tai Ji is not merely a form of regular exercise for me. Over and over, Tai Ji has been a significant part of my growth toward integration and harmony. It is both dance and meditation, prayer and stress-reduction all wrapped up into one.

As I settle into the sequence, I find it to be a daily opportunity to open my heart, clear my mind and experience sacred emptiness. In this place of receptivity to the Spirit, a new perspective about life forms. As Lao Tsu, an older contemporary of Confucius and founder of Taoism, wrote:

> Existence is beyond the power of words
> To define:
> Terms may be used
> But none of them absolute.
> In the beginning of heaven and earth there were no words.
> Words came out of the womb of matter:
> And whether one dispassionately
> Sees to the core of life
> Or passionately
> Sees the surface,
> The core and the surface
> Are essentially the same,
> Words making them seem different
> Only to express appearance.

Tom Dunham

If a name be needed,
    wonder names them both:
From wonder to wonder
Existence opens.

The regular practice and exploration of Tai Ji opens me up to an existence that is beyond the power of words. Whether I am improving the surface aspects, namely the specific movements in the Tai Ji form, or delving into the inner essence, the meaning within Tai Ji's earth-based metaphors, words make it seem different but only in appearance. Tai Ji is the opening and moving from one wondrous moment to the next, recognizing the fluidity and existence of spiritual energy.

Balancing Stillness and Motion

Ancient Chinese philosophers at times felt that meditation in motion was much better than simply sitting in one place. As an old Taoist is reported saying: "The stillness in stillness is not a real stillness: only when there is stillness in movement does the universal rhythm manifest itself." When the body, mind, and spirit harmonize and the Ch'i energy radiates forth from this place of synergy, Tai Ji becomes a very powerful vehicle for self-actualization.

During the spring and fall, I regularly meet with my Tai Ji students once a week in a local park for Tai Ji time at sunrise. Here a group of us become more attuned to the natural rhythms of the earth. We slow down our lives and our physical movements in order that we can become more in touch with our selves and our surroundings. We find the pulse of the universe through attuning to the Ch'i.

In the twelfth century A.D., Chu Hsi said.

> "Tai Ji, the primeval force, is like a tree. It grows a trunk and branches and twigs and flowers and leaves. It grows on and on . . . By the time it grows a fruit, there is contained in it the principle which makes it grow on and on. And it will so grow and become once more the primeval force Tai Ji, and there is no stopping it."

Students of Tai Ji use the form as a personal tuning device. Learning Tai Ji is a journey, and working on the form takes time and training. Daily practice makes one aware of the inner/outer self as well as the universe, all circling into harmony.

Members of Fellowship in Prayer in 80 countries form a global spiritual community of men and women—many of whom organize groups or correspond with each other in order to share spiritual insights and to pray for each other. If you would like to hear from or write to people in our Interfaith Network, please send us your name and address, and we will list it in our next issue.

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Arabic Prayer

It is glory enough for me
That I should be Your servant
It is grace enough for me
That You should be my Lord.

Morning Prayer

The birds outside my window
sing their morning praise
to God alive in every thing.
Their songs awaken me
and soon I join the worship
of the Infinite within.
Kevin Culligan

The Secrets of the Self

O Thou that art as the soul in the body of the universe,
Thou art our soul, and art ever fleeing from us.
Thou breathest music into life's flute:
Life envies death, when death is for Thy sake.
Once more bring comfort to our sad hearts:
Once more dwell in our breasts.
Once more demand from us the sacrifice of name and fame.
Strengthen our weak love,
We are often complaining of destiny.
Thou art of great price and we have nought.
Hide not Thy fair face from the empty-handed . . .
Give us the sleepless eye and the passionate heart.
Muhammad Iqbal

Teach me thy love to know;
That this new light, which now I see,
May both the work and worker show:
Then by a sunne-beam I will climbe to thee.
George Herbert

Speaking Up for Creation

DOUGLAS V. STEERE

A Quaker with a worldwide reputation reminds all men and women of our unlimited responsibility for the planet, today in desperate need of protection and preservation.

Early in his remarkable *Journal*, John Woolman tells us how as a young man he was touched by God's spirit: "My heart was often tender and contrite, and universal love for my fellow creatures increased in me." Woolman, who was born in 1720, saw that his fellow creatures included black people as well as white, and in costly ways this man spent himself to abolish slavery. But he did not stop at this. He believed that his "fellow creatures" involved all of the animal world, and he encouraged people to be especially tender with the animal creation that had been entrusted to them.

Almost two hundred years later, this same universal love of fellow creatures under the formula "reverence for life" led Albert Schweitzer to spend himself in trying to encourage people to inflict no more pain than was necessary and to seek in every way possible to lessen pain. When people in our time have girded themselves with nuclear and biological weapons and are threatening to snuff out the whole biological creation if they believe their security is menaced, Albert Schweitzer, knowing well enough what he was doing, dared to bring down the ridicule of the chancelleries of the world upon his head by speaking up for creation. This he did with a trust that at least the women of the world would understand him, and support him in his plea to have an end of this threat.

In such a scene, the loving Creator of us all lays on you and on me unlimited liability for all creation and for our fellow creatures everywhere. And as God told Teresa of Avila when she begged for a holiday, "Now is not the time to rest."

Professor emeritus of philosophy at Haverford College, Douglas Steere is a noted author whose many books include Prayer and Worship, On Beginning from Within, Work and Contemplation, Dimensions of Prayer, *and* Quaker Spirituality. *He represented the Religious Society of Friends as an observer-delegate at Vatican Council II, and has served both the National and the World Council of Churches. His essay is reprinted with the permission of* Pendle Hill Publications, *Wallingford, PA, 19086.*

Janet Gnall

I see the pure and the transcendent,
Without defect,
By seeing is salvation.
Sutta-Nipāta, 788-9, Pāli Canon

Ten Ways to Pray for Peace

CAROL BIALOCK

Most of us want peace.
Many of us pray for peace.
But do we perhaps need new ways of praying for our warring world?

Some suggestions that might help:

1. *Sit quietly.*

Center your energy in your heart. Visualize a healing white or green light (the color of brother/sisterhood) flow out from your heart to all in your home, your neighborhood, your city. Gradually extend that light to the whole world.

2. *Take a peace walk.*

Make it leisurely, enjoyable. Look around you with love. Let good-will, good wishes go forth from you to each being you encounter. Breathe in peace. Breath out peace. It is healing energy you are sending out to the world.

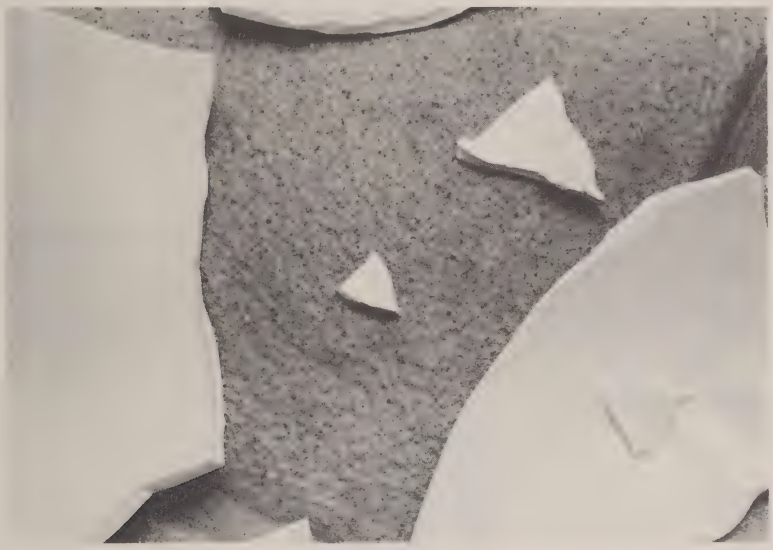
3. *Do prayerful reading.*

Spend some time doing reflective, prayerful reading in the sacred books of your religion or in the writings of persons like Gandhi or Martin Luther King. Ask to receive messages of peace.

4. *Sit still.*

Place your hands on your thighs, palms up. This is a posture of asking. Your mind does not need to formulate petitions. Your body already says what you want to say to God.

Carol Bialock, rscj, spent 19 years in Chile forming Base Communities. A writer and poet, she now serves the homeless in San Jose, CA.



Tom Dunham

5. *Let peace flow through you.*

At the end of a period of prayer, when you feel centered, spread out your arms slowly, and let peace flow through them to the whole world. Again, the gesture speaks for you.

6. *Close your eyes.*

Let an image of peace come to you. It may be a calm scene from nature, or world leaders shaking hands or a play of light and color, or any image that speaks to you. Stay with it as long as you find it helpful.

7. *Choose a word that is peace-giving for you.*

It may be the word "Peace" itself, or "love" or "light" or "Jesus" or "Buddha." Repeat it on every intake of breath, until you yourself feel the peace you are seeking for the world.

8. *Ask God to make you a persevering peacemaker.*

Both at home and at work. Peace starts small.

9. *Ask God to bless others.*

The people you don't get along with, your enemies, the enemies of the United States. This is a potent and purifying prayer.

10. *Sing a song about peace.*

Draw a picture. Dance, wrestle, groan, hug, write. All these can be turned into very effective ways of praying. Try some!

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The suggested donation for a year of *Fellowship in Prayer* is $15.00. Many readers, however, send more than that amount as a way of becoming a "Spiritual Friend" to those unable to contribute (especially men and women in hospitals, nursing and old age homes, and religious institutions).

In addition to sending in your own contribution and request to receive *FIP*, won't you become a "Spiritual Friend" to someone in need? You will earn their lasting gratitude—and ours.

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Please use the back of this sheet for your comments.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Members of Fellowship in Prayer in 66 countries form a global spiritual community of men and women—many of whom organize groups or correspond with each other in order to share spiritual insights, and to pray for each other.

If you would like to hear from people in your area (or overseas), please send us your name and address, and we will list it in our next issue.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Telephone (optional) _____

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her c/o F.i.P., *291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, and she will give you her answer in our next issue.*

Dear Angela,

In a recent column, you mentioned your desire to be an older American pup with grace and dignity. Could you please speak a bit more about this?

Thanks,
Another Older American Pup

Dear Older Pup,

Thank you for writing and for giving me an opportunity to speak about this important issue. One thing is very clear: Old age is not for babies! Growing older with grace and dignity requires strength, courage, flexibility, patience, good humor, faith, and fortitude. We cannot fight or fool Mother Nature. The best we can do is embrace her.

Our culture has a deep reverence for youth and a fear and dread of getting older. The collective idea that old age is a stage of life to be dreaded is an idea that easily rubs off on individuals. If we believe that getting older is terrible, we can pretty well bet that getting older will be just as we say it is.

Getting older does seem to demand our very best, but there is good news. Life is still rich and full of meaning. Pleasure and love run deeper. There is a sacredness to the daily routine that is very sustaining. There is more time for quietness, reflection, meditation, and prayer. There is time to be slow and easy, to focus deeply on just one thing. You can take more time to gaze at a great view. There is time to write your memoirs or give heartfelt advice. The golden years may be the time when you make a deep connection with another. You have time to smell the flowers and sniff Christmas trees until your nose is full. The golden years provide time in mid-afternoon for tea and biscuits or water and Cheerios.

In The Garden — Think

June Moreau

rs

As I've already mentioned, getting older requires us to be all that we can be. It stretches us spiritually. Some of this stretching comes in the form of losing some of our physical capabilities. Enduring these losses with grace and dignity is the single greatest task facing us. For me, it is frustrating to be at my most spiritually wise while being limited by failing eyesight, hearing, and energy; as we get older it appears that life requires us to be more flexible and make adjustments. Life requires us to re-evaluate our zest lists. The zest list is a list of our most favorite things. For example, when I was a puppy-pup, I loved to break out, roam the neighborhood, and bark at any uniformed postal employee I met along the way. Now I prefer roaming the basement, circling my blanket six or seven times in rapid succession, and barking at no one in particular. I have lost my appetite to roam, but not to eat. A day filled with many trips to the kitchen and several good noshes is a high-quality day. I once loved walking across town, now I love walking around the block. I used to love lying underneath the couch, now I love lying on my blanket or on my own private pillow filled with cedar-chip shavings. As we approach our full spiritual maturity, our zest list may change, it may shorten or lengthen. Remember, your own zest list is sacred and needs to be honored by you, your family, and friends.

Being an older American pup or kid with grace requires that we learn how to balance. Each of us must find the balance between not fighting getting older and not giving in to getting older. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it. We must find the balance between life as a social butterfly and the meditating monk. Some of us need company, others require more solitude. If you are living life as a meditating monk and loving it, then respect this need, and ask others to respect it also. If you are the social butterfly living the monk's life, then you may need to ask for assistance to gain the proper balance. For me, I want to be walked but not dragged across town. I want my beloveds near me on the same floor, but not on the same couch. I want my friend Barbara to be with me and rub my chest, but not for too long. Yes, I want attention and I want to putter off and ponder by myself. Balancing your needs successfully is the key to growing older with grace and dignity.

Sometimes as older American pups or older American kids we get the mistaken idea that we are no longer of use to anyone. Feeling this way not only gives one the blues unnecessarily, but does not lead to a graceful, dignified older age. For anyone willing and daring enough to turn

this idea inside out and upside down, great love opportunities await you. Begin a spiritual advice column, or dictate your memoirs to a friend. Fall in love. In this regard, I am a lucky dog. I have a good friend who needs me and often tells me so. I know that I am useful and it goes beyond the partnership we share through this column. Being useful, needed, and loved helps me keep on truckin' even when I'm snoozing.

If you are an older American kid or pup, get some help finding someone you can be of use to. Offer a younger soul a listening ear and a caring heart. If you are a young soul, seek out an older American kid or pup to honor, depend upon, and even love. Ask a soul in their golden years to share their stories, their wisdom, and their time with you. Everybody wins when you do.

Before I close, allow me to leave you with a few age-old parables for a dignified and graceful older age.

(1) Do not waste one minute of your life living someone else's.

(2) You cannot fight or fool Mother Nature.

(3) It is best to not interfere too much in Mother Nature's plan for you.

(4) Keep making adjustments.

(5) Be of good cheer.

(6) Accept.

(7) Relax.

(8) Sniff the good sniff.

(9) Have faith.

I hope I have been of some help and hope to all of you older American pups and kids, like me.

Faithfully,
Angela

To the Tune of the Hebrew M'awe Otz'ur (Rock of Ages)

Rock of ages, let our song
grace the saving powers.
Strike the cymbal, sound the
gong:
we are as trees and flowers,

every child a blessing,
each free thought interesting,
no nation king, so let us sing
for joy and hope and feasting.

This globe belongs to creatures,
its mountains and its seashores;
let's save us all, least frog, great
whale,
and let th'embittered teach us.

Sing out the message cheering
that the time is nearing
which will see all people free,
tyranny disappearing.

Children of oppression's claw,
whether ours or others',
set your hearts to find the law
which cuts all ties that smother.

Compassion is the lesson
for the coming seasons,
let voices blend, this earth to
mend
and harmony to fashion.

Our blood flows in one color
and laughter knows all cultures.
We all need hope, we all can help.
All language tongues 'hosanna'.

Else what we've made will doom
us,
heat, God, and fire consume us,
all races one, beneath the bomb,
melted genes entomb us.

So let us likeness measure,
share food as global treasure,
and differences will light the way
to transform fear to pleasure.

Sing out our message cheering
that the time is nearing
which will see all people free
tyrants disappearing.

Elizabeth Anne Socolow

Janet Gnall

The Malaise

that grabbed me and dragged me
by the scruff of the neck, week upon week,
1982,3, and on and on:

Blacking me out without warning, or knowledge
after, really weird and most upsetting to my
equilibrium, which I lost, hanging onto chair
to doorsill.

Weakening by the week, scarcely able
to make my way across a room without
help. When the doctors and the specialist
asked me for symptoms, headache, stomach
ache, pain, etc. no, no, no. I tried to
explain:

I am out of sync.
O, they said, and gave me
brainscans, and spinals,
blood tests, etcetera, for
dollars and dollars.

Finally, at the hospital three announced, not even
apologetically; We don't know what you've had,
or what you've got, but we think you are getting
over it. (Thanksalot.)

One day allday in bed, I
didn't think I would make it,
you know. And I called my friend,
and dumped it all in her lap.

She listened and listened, and when I finally ran down,
she made me wait a longtime. Then she barked!

HOW THANKFUL ARE YOU ?

After a breath or two, I answered O, and hung up. *She saved a life that day*. By the time my husband came
from handball, I had counted so many blessings, I
had not one complaint left.

What did I count? Well,
I began at the bottom of the bed, with my feet.
Toenails. Can't walk without toes and toenails.

Okay, and both of mine work? My ankles are flexible,
and without pain. And I worked all the way up, O yes,
and when I finished outside, I began inside. Tests
showed me clean liver, heart, etc. O my! When I polished
off the body, then the bedstead: this one a gift from
my husband's father and mother, a wedding gift to them
from Catherine Isabel's parents, the Archibald
Mackinnons. The bed, my husband and brother were spawned
in, and our four.

Solid walnut, in the pineapple pattern, an entire
set, circa 1899: bed with dresser and washstand. We own the
tall brown pitcher, marked in white pattern. A glorious
antique.

After, I moved in mind through the rooms of our
beautiful home among the pines and firs.
Rhododendron in May, roses in summer, and holly for Christ-
mas. And who came? Family and friends. I spent a longtime
counting the blessings here. It I were counting now I would add
another, great grandson. O MiLord.

And I began to sing inside, you know, not out loud,
no breath—both words and refrain, and looking out the wide
window into the evergreens, *I saw the White Christ*!

When my husband came I said, I think
I'll have tea by the fireplace. Fine,
I'll make a fire and put the kettle on.
All this in March. By June, I am standing,
walking free, when I crashed and
broke my hip. A blessing? Yes!
Within the will that therapy demands,
I am healed of my malaise.
I'm going to get well now.
Nixeon Civille Handy

Elizabeth Anne Socolow is the author of Laughing at Gravity: Conversations with Isaac Newton, *which won The Barnard Women Poets Series Prize in 1987. The mother of two sons, she is currently teaching at St. Andrew's School in Delaware.*

A nationally acclaimed poet who resides in Seattle, WA, Nixeon Civille Handy is listed in Who's Who of American Women. *Her latest volume of poetry is entitled* A Little Leaven.

Into God's Presence

DAVID R. SMITH

After a long search for the prayer style best suited to his own personality and temperament, this writer found the right one—a way to experience God's presence.

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" (typed and double spaced), to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

My parents raised me in an atmosphere that viewed spiritual matters as peripheral and sentimental, and I never heard them pray. I suppose it was because I went to church regularly—often alone—that they would ask me to pray when they thought prayer was needed, during visits to sick relatives and over Thanksgiving meals. At one big family meal, as I sat trying to think of something to say, everybody began sniggering and talking. Someone yelled "aye-MEN," we started eating, and I was glad to be off the hook.

Throughout those years, I remember hearing only one liturgical prayer—the weekly recitation of the Lord's Prayer in the United Methodist Church whose youth group had attracted my attention. I most remember being fascinated by the rhythm of the voices bouncing around the sanctuary. I listened specifically for the splashing of the rapid-fire "s" sounds at the words: "treSpaSSeS, aS we forgive thoSe who treSpaSS againSt uS"—they seemed to erupt from the prayer like rockets, rushing to the ceiling.

As I gained more and more opportunities to visit other worship settings and gatherings, I found that a very bitter distrust of liturgical prayer had formed on my personal theology. I automatically assumed that liturgical prayers had no heart. When I prayed, I simply closed my eyes for a few minutes, and then began to talk to God as to a friend sitting in the room, and I supposed that any other way was cold and impersonal.

My transformation began at the Abbey of Gethsemane in Kentucky. I

David Smith is Director of the Gifford Street Hospitality House for Youth in Syracuse, NY.

had attended retreats there and other places, but one particular retreat differed in that I scheduled five days, I came alone, and I brought no books with me. I had come to pray. I wanted to spend hours each day sitting in my cell, talking to God like a friend.

Two things surprised me during this retreat. First, I ran out of things to say. My life, my desires, my causes—each issue that I wanted to talk about withered away as I felt God's presence in the room more than I had ever felt before. I found myself spending much of my retreat silently worshipping this presence, with a desire to express my joy and excitement bubbling within me. I wanted to speak, but I couldn't find any words. As a result, it was during this retreat that I came to recognize the depth of spirituality in the Psalm chanting of the monks, because for the first time I realized that the struggles of the Psalm writers had been my struggle as well.

Secondly, during dinner, they played a tape of a lecture on the "Seven Last Words of Christ." The teacher noted that Jesus' cry "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mk 15.34), quotes Psalm 22—a liturgical prayer. In this moment of physical and spiritual crisis, Jesus found refuge in the traditional prayers of his faith.

Perhaps, I began to think, liturgical prayers were not so bad after

Tom Dunham

all. I had not been able to invent my own words to express my response to God's presence, at least, words that didn't sound shallow and contrived. And I knew that my feeble mind did not commune with God very well in total silence, and would certainly be even more needy outside the monastery. I also knew that I wanted above all things to emulate Jesus' life, especially his spiritual life—and if he used liturgical prayers, I would at least give it a try.

I truthfully cannot recall how my first prayer book turned out to be the Service Book of the Antiochian Orthodox Church. I remember having it with me the next time I visited Gethsemane, perhaps a year later, but I don't remember where I got it. I can recall, however, the feeling of foolishness and superstition the first time I devoted my morning prayer time to the readings in it. I couldn't close my eyes. I couldn't get the rhythm of the lines. When I finished, I didn't feel as if I had prayed at all. I believe that I tried several times to make these prayers part of my day, and I gave up many times. Coming back to Gethsemane with that book signaled a significant stage of growth for me, because it meant that I had embraced the prayer style used by a large portion of Christianity, and had chosen to do so precisely because it really worked for me. It meant that I decided to make the recitation of Old Testament Psalms part of my prayer discipline. Even now, I bathe in God's presence with these words that I don't entirely understand, but which make more prayer-sense than my own words. As I began to connect with this deep well of expression, which the Prayer Book links to the liturgical prayers of the early years of Christianity, I found myself overcoming my old prejudices concerning different prayer styles.

I don't know exactly when the transformation occured, but today, when I close my eyes to speak with God, the ancient words of the Eastern Orthodox Church take me effortlessly into God's presence. I don't chat with God anymore; perhaps I will again someday, but not now. The sensations which come upon me when I recite my prayers come from a "Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth Who is everywhere and fills all things" . . . : a Majesty Who awes me.

But neither am I resentful of other prayer styles, for now I realize that my own small life has at some time embraced much of what others hold presently. Of one thing I am sure; the authors of traditional prayers knew the human struggle to experience God better than I do, and when I use the words they offer, my soul, like a rocket rushing to the ceiling, flies to God.

What God Did for Zeke the Fuzzy Caterpillar

ROBERT O'ROURKE

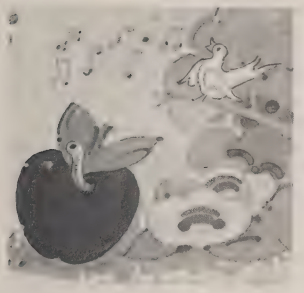
These were long days for Zeke . . .
  Slow, easy days to think.
Curled up in his snug cocoon
  with the sunshine warming him.
He could remember another time
    another place
    another life
When he was a caterpillar.

Oh, but he was busy then . . .
  Dodging big trucks on the road
  Climbing up fence posts
  Crawling across fields
    but mostly

Bob O'Rourke is a writer and folk artist who carves santos, *statues of the saints most revered by the people of New Mexico and the southwest. His story about Zeke the Fuzzy Caterpillar will be republished this summer by Standard Publishing.*

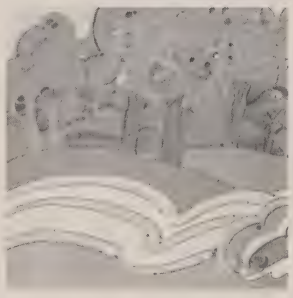
he was busy eating everything . . .
leaves
grass
flowers
anything green and growing!
It had been a time for taking!
All around him there was giving!
His favorite tree soaked up sunshine
but it gave back juicy, red apples.
The old river took in tiny streams,
but it gave water to the clouds
so there would be rain.

Even the bird who pecked a hundred seeds
gave back pretty songs!
What could he give?



Curled up in his cocoon,
Zeke could only remember taking . . .
sunshine
dewdrops
green things.
He knew he could never give
back anything like . . .
juicy red apples
or raindrops
or happy songs.

But long ago
in the very beginning of things
God had a wonderful plan
for you and me

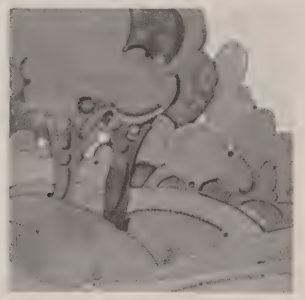


trees
rivers
birds
And even little, fuzzy caterpillars
like Zeke!
God gave us all
the gift of life.

And
The secret and purpose of life
is to return to God
a very special gift . . .
a beautiful life!
Because . . .
Everyone can give that gift.

As the sun warmed his snug coccon,
Zeke slowly began to waken.
It was as if each sunray gave him
  new energy—new life.
He twisted and turned
He strained and pushed . . .
  And suddenly his cocoon broke open.

Zeke squeezed through the hole
  onto a very high limb.
He felt himself all over . . .
  Where were his short, stubby legs?
  Where had his soft, fuzzy hair gone?
  His long, wiggly body was gone, too.
Instead he felt wings . . .
  And graceful long legs
  And big brown eyes.



As Zeke warmed in the sun,
He felt little zingy, alive feelings inside.
He wanted to . . .
sail on a breeze
follow a sunbeam
kiss a flower
And suddenly it happened . . .
He was part of the world again.

This time he floated over the fields
instead of bumping along the ground.
Zeke loved what he had become.
Now it was a time for giving!
This time, he thought,
I'll give something special back.
not apples
or rain clouds
or songs

This time I will give
bright colors
grace
beauty!
Zeke felt wonderful!

It is with great sorrow that we announce the death of Edwiene Schmitt, a long-time Trustee of Fellowship in Prayer. As her obituary in the New York Times noted, Ms. Schmitt was a New York attorney concentrating in the area of estate planning. In 1989, Lutheran Community Services awarded her their Woman of the Year Citation for decades of effort and generosity on behalf of others. A Memorial Fund has been established in her name.

* * * * *

FiP Trustee, Fred Olessi, has recently been named Vice President of The Executive Council on Foreign Diplomats, located in Armonk, NY. Fred's interesting and challenging new assignment is to bring together corporate executives, foreign diplomats, and State Department experts in an ongoing exchange of information and ideas designed to increase the flow of trade and commerce.

* * * * *

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Linda D. Baumann as FiP's new office manager. Ms. Baumann brings with her an outstanding record of creative work in her field.

* * * * *

Among the most rewarding developments in recent FiP history is the request for the publication from Eastern European countries. Letters from Russia, Yugoslavia, and the former East Germany, for example, express a tremendous spiritual thirst for the ideas and experiences that *FiP* presents.

* * * * *

A Conference entitled "The Wisdom of the Dream," will be held on June 15, 1991, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:15 p.m., at the Woodrow Wilson School in Princeton, NJ. The program will present 3 films on the life and work of C. G. Jung, whose thinking has had a major impact on religion in the 20th century. Conference participants will include Nathan Schwartz-Salant, a Jungian analyst; Ann Ulanov, Professor of Psychiatry and Religion at Union Theological Seminary; and Barry Ulanov, Professor of English at Barnard College. The Conference is designed to invite inquiry into the inner life of the soul. For more information, contact the Salant Foundation, 301 N. Harrison St., Princeton, NJ 08540; (609) 683-9115.

We welcome your comments. Please send them to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

What a wonderful idea—a prayer network of people of different faiths praying together! Please print my name in your new "Interfaith Network" feature.

Jane J. Davis; Wateruliet, NY

Through a retreat I made two years ago in Indianapolis, I became familiar with *FiP*. It was a gift beside my bed and a gift for the heart. Thank you for all the wonder it contains.

Paula Bourne; Bloomington, IN 47405

The thoughts expressed in your articles have tremendous power to change lives.

Vera Grunow; Fair Haven, NJ

In my attempts to provide faith-experiences for the men here (at MECC penitentiary), I frequently use articles from *FiP* as a basis for prayer services and the likes. Your publication is always filled with the kind of hope and faith statements we can use to aid the healing and bolster the esteem of the men here. You gift us with each issue.

Jerome B. Robben; Pacific, MO

I appreciate your precious little journal and pass it on to others.

Romana Hertal, osf; Milwaukee, WI

I enjoy your journal very much. Good variety of articles—well written, and easy to read.

Joseph Imediegiou; Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

FiP is excellent!

Joseph B. Lyman; Minneapolis, MN

I wish to express my sincere thanks for the outstanding publication which you represent. *Fellowship in Prayer* certainly reflects humanity's developing consciousness. It is refreshing to hear of those who continue to emerge from their chrysalis to expose the breathtaking beauty of human awareness.

I am a student of theology and have recently completed my degree of

Master of the Arts at Loyola University of Chicago. I currently teach religion to high school students and plan to pursue the doctorate in theology this fall.

I would like to accept your invitation to join the spiritual community of correspondence which you suggested in the February 1991 issue. There is nothing more worthwhile than an honest exchange of experience and I would be grateful to be included in such an adventure.

I would like to thank you and all who work with you for helping so many develop a better understanding of this wonderful journey.

Ted Kepes, Jr.; DesPlaines, IL

I have been reading *FiP* for some time now and have really enjoyed it. The truly ecumenical nature of your publication is what appeals to me most. Would you know of any retreat center in the country that would embody your approach to spirituality, i.e., inclusive, in terms of various religious traditions? Very often some of my friends, not belonging to any denomination, are uncomfortable around symbols of a particular religion. It would be nice to share time with others by connecting at a deep level such as prayer. I know of no retreat center that serves the religiously "non-aligned." If you have any information along those lines I would appreciate knowing about it.

Paqui Nelson; Palo Alto, CA

I began receiving *FiP* as a gift, and what a wonderful enlightening gift it has been! For years, it has continued to come, and it dawned on me that I had never sent in a subscription fee—(until now). Guess I needed that experience of grace to realize that I don't have to earn or pay for love.

Carroll Spigner; Columbia, SC 29205

For many years we have been receiving and enjoying your most inspirational journal. Our guests (at the Monastery of Our Lady of the Resurrection) also enjoy it. Continue the good work of spreading the good word. Let us all unite in prayers for peace.

Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourette; Lagrangeville, NY

Just a small contribution to thank you for this wonderful publication that someone sent to me anonymously. I enjoy it very much and have incorporated many of the articles into my spiritual practice both personally and professionally.

Barbara Saslow; New York, NY

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